

with the recent decision of Sinclair to force its 64 stations to air a program that totally goes against our election rules in its partisan stance, I am outraged that our public airways are being used in this manner to undermine our democracy. The FCC has had little problem censoring certain forms of speech and programming on the airways as in the case of Janet Jackson's "wardrobe malfunction" during the superbowl, however, when it comes down to one of the most critical cases, one in which our very democracy is at stake, the FCC remains silent, or tries to claim that it is supporting 1st ammendment rights. In addition this behavior has a particularly suspicious appearance when one takes into account the relationship of the chairman of the FCC, Michael Powell's relationship to the current administration. Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.